

Senator Anne Carney, chair of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is John Howard, living in Lisbon, and I'm a member of the Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland where issues of justice are very central to our faith. I am testifying in support of LD 1259 An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement.

Having local police divert their very limited time and resources to assist ICE in harassing Maine residents is a terrible idea. I am retired and work in Lewiston assisting our immigrant population, so I know that trust in our police service is already compromised – we need to rebuild it so people will come forward with information that could help solve or prevent crime. I am delivering resources to folks who are afraid to leave their homes. The related bill LD 1971 is also well crafted to allow for exceptions where there is a serious public safety threat, informing residents of their rights before interviews with immigration authorities and prohibiting discrimination based on immigration status.

Having our local police forcibly remove people off the street and from schools or healthcare facilities would break the trust that is essential to the ability to keep us safe.

As UUs we believe in encouraging multicultural communities such as we have in Lewiston where all feel welcome and can thrive. For these reasons I strongly encourage an “ought to pass” vote on both LD 1259 and LD 1971. Thank you.

John Howard
37 Champagne Lane
Lisbon, ME 04250

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